

**ACCIÓ**



**RaiSE**  
Interreg Europe



# **RaiSE**

***Enhancing social enterprises competitiveness through improved business support policies***

## **Eighth interregional meeting**

### **Project Meeting Report**

12 May 2020

Online meeting

## OVERVIEW OF THE ONLINE PROJECT MEETING

### BACKGROUND

The eighth interregional meeting of the RaiSE project took place online on 12 May 2020. Originally, the meeting had to take place in Barcelona on the 12-13 May 2020, including the internal management meeting and study visits to learn about the status of implementation of the Catalan Action Plan. However, the Covid-19 emergency altered the initial plans: the meeting had to be shortened and celebrated online.

The meeting had the following agenda:

#### **15:00 -15:30 Internal management of the RaiSE project by the lead partner ACCIÓ**

Financial management & reporting

Project management & communication

#### **15:30 – 16:30 Status of the implementation of each Action Plan + Debate By all project partners**

Estimated times: 15:30 Örebro, 15:35 ART-ER, 15:40 Scottish Enterprise, 15:45 WestBIC, 15:50 IFKA, 15:55 ACCIÓ, 16:00 ZSI, 16:10 Debate.

Paula Santarén and Juan Luis Aparicio (ACCIÓ) welcomed the RaiSE project partners via Microsoft Teams meeting and explained them in detail the current status of the project and the next steps:

### Financial management and reporting

- Phase I performance:
  - The ERDF transfer to partners for Progress Report 5 was made during the second week of January 2020.
  - 94.3 % of budget performance according to closed progress reports. Delayed payments from Phase I not included.
- Progress Report 6:
  - PR6 Period 01/07/2019 – 30/06/2020
    - One year period expenses, remember to include delayed payments from Phase I (incurred between January and June 2019 but paid afterwards) as informed to the JS.
    - Submission to LP via iOLF on 01/09/2020 at the latest once validated by the First Level Controller.
  - Policy change template for Joint Progress Report must be sent to LP on 31 July 2020 at the latest.
  - 103,704 € (7% of total budget) to be reported according to the application form.

- iOLF:
  - Excel file: to be sent to the LP just before submitting PR to the FLC, to solve possible errors.
  - Reported expenses: Every item/expense in the PR has to be explained in detail (iOLF external expertise and services section). Even staff costs. JS has to know who is who and each role in the project.
  - Delayed payments from Phase I as informed to JS in November 2019: Inform in the description box when a expense comes from a delayed payment of Phase I. Very important.
- Progress Report 7 and project closure:
  - By 30/06/2021:
    - All the project activities must have been completed (including FLC).
    - All payments must have been made, meaning debited from the bank account.
  - PR6 Period 01/07/2020 – 30/06/2021
    - Submission to LP via iOLF on 31/05/2021 at the latest once validated by the First Level Controller.
    - The last three months of the project should be exclusively dedicated to the administrative closure. No activities can be programmed.
  - Budget 20% change flexibility
    - A 20% budget flexibility for each budget line at project level and per partner according to the current figures: Budget performance at 98% Phase I and including delayed payments. Detail: Staff 100.5%, Travel and accommodation 99.5%, External expertise and services 85.5%.
    - To hav ein mind for Phase II budget: Travel and accommodation and external expertise and services shall see an under performance due to the current situation with the virus and the possibility of travelling or holding meetings.

## Project management

A reminder of Phase 2 activities:

We will...	We won't...
<p><b>Monitor our AP pro-actively:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ensure regular contact with our stakeholders to follow-up the implementation of the actions.</li> <li>✓ If relevant, contact the final beneficiaries of the actions to assess the effects of the implementation.</li> <li>✓ Bilateral meetings LP-PP.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Celebrate stakeholder meetings</b> (unless it is included in the Action Plan and it doesn't involve RaiSE budget).</p>
<p><b>Disseminate news and achievements</b> of the project: articles, videos, pictures...</p>	<p><b>Exchange experiences "officially"</b> (no study visits, no identification of good practices).</p>
<p><b>Participate in project meetings</b> and Interreg Europe annual events.</p>	<p><b>Invite stakeholders to the project meetings</b> (there is no budget for this in Phase 2).</p>

- The main activity of the current semester is monitoring the implementation of Action Plans. The template “Report on policy instruments for Progress Report 6” has to be sent to ACCIÓ by 31 July 2020. Afterwards, the LP communicated to PPs an extension of this deadline until 1 September 2020.
- The LP asks to PPs to send news for the website, showing results and achievements.

## Phase 2 project meetings

- S7 (12 May 2020): online meeting that replaces the project meeting in Barcelona, to exchange on the success and difficulties met in the implementation of the action plans.
- S9 (February 2021): high-level political dissemination event + project meeting in Barcelona to draw conclusions. This meeting could be online also (it all depends on the coronavirus evolution).

## Phase 2 other events

- European Social Economy Summit (Mannheim, November 2020): ART-ER, Örebro, ZSI & ACCIÓ submitted a proposal for workshop.
- Europe, Let’s cooperate! (Online, 9 June 2020): Interreg Europe Annual Event.

## Communication

- RaiSE website: we had 676 sessions in Semester 6 and 403 sessions in Semester 7 (4 months), so we didn’t reach our goal of 1.000 sessions per reporting period and are not anymore among the “Top 10” most visited Interreg Europe website. As we are in Phase 2 of the project, the activity has decreased, but Paula Santarén encouraged project partners to send news for the website about the implementation of the regional Action Plans, showing results and achievements. The most read sections are: Library (Studies), Good practices and News.
- RaiSE Twitter: 620 tweets (+148) and 432 followers (+60) until May 2020. It is working very well.
- RaiSE YouTube: 1.663 views (+267) in total. Our promotional video and project meetings videos have lots of followers. Westport video is still under production.
- Dissemination events that took place during Semester 6 and 7:
  - Interreg Europe’s film crew visited Örebro in Summer 2019 to film the documentary “No one is left behind”, as Örebro’s policy change was selected as an example among the 66 projects about SME competitiveness.
  - Webinar on “Getting your project to the EU Regions Week” (4 March 2020): Paula Santarén was interviewed to explain how RaiSE and Social Seeds applied for a joint workshop in the frame of the EU Regions Week.

- Webinar on “Business support schemes for social enterprises” (12 March 2020): Gael Drummond presented the Scottish good practice for RaiSE “Firstport” and Paula Santarén explained ACCIÓ’s services for the internationalisation of social enterprises and Örebro’s policy change.

## **Status of the implementation of each Action Plan + Debate By all project partners**

### **Region Örebro County**

During the period, according to our Action Plan, we have focused on two types of activities. First, we have continued to coordinate the Partnership for Social Innovation. We have had three physical assembly meetings for all partners (28 August, 7 November and 26 February). In addition, the Partnership’s working committee meet every three weeks to discuss ongoing issues and to plan the assembly meetings. Until now, special effort was put into preparing the Partnership for future structural funds and how to coordinate forthcoming project activities.

Secondly, in collaboration with the Cesam Foundation, we have been implementing the project on new financial solutions for civil society and social economy. During the period, we have conducted a large number of interviews with representatives from, among others, social enterprises and public sector, in order to clarify the needs and interest in new financial solutions. Due to the spread of covid-19 the planned conference has been postponed.

### **ART-ER**

Activities done, impact and results so far (July 2019 – June 2020):

- 1) *Regional Operational Plan 2014-2020 of European Social Fund (ESF) - investment priority 8.5: launch of a specific call for tender aimed to the training of social enterprises managers.*

- Activities done so far:

In November 4 2019, the Service Programming of Educational Activities, Training, Employment and Knowledge of the Emilia-Romagna Region and the Managing Authority of the European Social Fund opened for 3 months (until February 4, 2020) the call “Skills for Social Innovation”. Emilia-Romagna Region has made available 1.5 million euros for empowering social and non-social enterprises with the skills to innovate their expertise, products and services and respond to people’s new needs. Two kind of operations were admitted: continuous training courses for the acquisition of social entrepreneurship’s skills and non-course training actions aimed at transferring the acquired skills into the organizational contexts.

The action has been elaborated within stakeholder and bilateral meetings with the Regional Government and ART-ER since September 2018. The stakeholders’ meeting held in February 2019 confirmed the will of the Regional Government to promote the above-mentioned

operation. In the first half of 2019, the details of the call (amount to be allocated, type of eligible operations, evaluation criteria and number of hours for training) were discussed in consideration of the resources still available in the programming period that closes in 2020.

- Impact and results:

17 eligible subjects participated in the call and submitted 25 projects.

This action represents an important result because for the first time, social enterprises are specifically mentioned as recipients of funds for increasing their competitiveness through skills development. As a goal of RaiSE and work carried out by ART-ER with the Regional Government, the call for tenders also encourages socio-economic partnerships as a constant interaction between multiple stakeholders and between both profit and non-profit companies.

The action is consistent both with the objectives of the ESF ROP 2014-2020 and with the Labour Pact of the Emilia-Romagna Region - which was defined in 2015, as a development tool for a new social cohesion. The Labour Pact highlights how a "strong, open sustainable and global economy needs innovative skills and human capital interventions consistent with the strategies outlined".

Regional stakeholders expressed satisfaction for the work done considered courageous but also very positive because in synergy with the current and future regional strategy and planning. The benefit is the network action envisaged with the promotion of profit and nonprofit partnerships and the fact that is not just training but accompaniment of the acquisition of skills with direct action in the companies.

- Further activities to be implemented:

Evaluation of presented proposals and projects approval for financing. ART-ER and Emilia-Romagna Region will monitor the projects' implementation by beneficiaries. Foreseen actions:

- analysis of approved projects
- mapping of projects' partnerships
- questionnaires/interviews to SE involved as beneficiaries (implementation stage and at the end).
- maintenance of stakeholders' table to coordinate and disseminate project's results and achievements including participants and beneficiaries that did not have a project approved
- dissemination and communication activities

## 2) *Regional Operational Plan 2014-2020 of the European Regional Development Fund. Definition of a social impact assessment system in the tender evaluation phase.*

- Activities done so far:

ART-ER, in agreement with the Emilia-Romagna Region, has included in the annual activity plan for 2020 of the three-year agreement (2020-2022), a sheet that includes action 2 of the RaiSE Action Plan. Among others, there are these two objectives:

- Develop the introduction of tools for assessing social impact
- Social Innovation and European Programming 2021-2027
- Activities to be implemented:
  - Definition and setting up of an impact assessment system for the projects supported by the regional call "Contributions for the support of projects of local importance promoted by voluntary organizations or social promotion associations, as well as by the Program Agreement signed with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies and the Emilia-Romagna Region pursuant to articles 72 and 73 of Legislative Decree no. 117/2017, 3rd Sector Code "
  - Elaboration, publication, communication and dissemination of the evaluation report
  - Analysis and deepening of European programs 2021-2017 with respect to regional priorities in the field of economy and social innovation
  - Contribution to the definition of regional policies in synergy with the new European programming
  - Contributions for the inclusion of economic and social innovation issues in the new programming of cohesion funds (ESF, EAFRD, ERDF, EMFF)
- Impact and results:

Not yet available. Activities should have started in February/March 2020 after the regional elections held in January. Now delayed a cause of COVID 19.

3) *Emilia-Romagna ROP ERDF 2014-2020 in connection with S3 - Smart Specialization Strategy: creation of a community of public and private entities (research centers, companies, training institutions) that share ideas, skills, tools, resources to support start-ups operating in the social sector and promote competitiveness of social enterprises.*

- Activities done so far:

The above-mentioned annual plan for 2020 of the three-year agreement (2020-2022) between ART-ER and the Emilia-Romagna Region also provides for the activity of "Stakeholder management and networks for innovation and the social economy".

It aims to promote and enhance the experiences of social innovation and social enterprise as distinctive elements of our Region at European and international level and to promote the creation of networks, supply chains and clusters through the involvement of the local actors.

Foreseen actions related to RaiSE Action Plan:

- Support for the consolidation of networks, chains and clusters to promote social economy enterprises at regional, European and international level (B2B meetings, networking workshops and national and international events).
- Support for the application and implementation of projects within the European funding programs (for example, INTERREG, HORIZON, FAMI, COSME)

Moreover, as part of the S3 strategy for the new 2021/2027 programming, ARTER is working on the proposal to insert cross-sectoral thematic areas. Among these, SOCIAL INNOVATION AND PARTICIPATION understood as

- Innovative welfare solutions to meet social and community needs
- Technological and organizational innovation of social economy organizations
- Digital Social Innovation: technologies and participation devices (including crowdsensing and crowdsourcing) for the inclusion and empowerment of citizens in the transformation of the PA and the territory
- Participatory processes and models for the identification and management of social challenges (Human-Centered Design and Co-design of innovation) also through the use of big data and AI
- Methods and models for public engagement and open science for participatory research and innovation
- Evaluation models, including economic-financial models, and management of social impact
- New financial instruments based on the social impacts produced and social / social impact finance
- Impact and results:

Not yet available. Activities just started and going slowly a cause of COVID-19.

## Scottish Enterprise

1 action of the Action Plan has been boosted. The study has been extended (new tender). Digitalisation. Launched in April. Specific support to SE sector for the coronavirus, all money has gone there: <https://scvo.org.uk/support/coronavirus/funding/scottish-government/third-sector-resilience-fund>. Digital & visual content. Loss of trading = a lot more online content.

2 actions of the Action Plan have been negatively affected:

The International social observatory is still going on. Global research & policy initiatives (international research). Attract investment & global start-ups to Scotland. Organise visits to Scotland to learn the SE sector.

The SEWF has been postponed for this year. The internationalisation missions for SE within the SEWF, inspired by the Catalan missions for SE, have been put on hold.

## WestBIC

Following widespread consultation with the Community Enterprise sector the Irish Government approved and published in July 2019 the first ever Social Enterprise policy for Ireland entitled "National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022". A working group to advise the Government had been established to provide valuable information from the Social Enterprise



Sector in the formulation of this policy. WestBIC as RaiSE project partners were invited to join this group shortly after RaiSE project approval. Through the RaiSE project a comprehensive database of Social Enterprises was established for the North West region of Ireland and these were subsequently surveyed in a format agreed with the working group and validated by University College Cork.

3 members of the working group including its Chairperson were invited to visit RaiSE partner regions to learn from RaiSE partners and to participate in study visits. This all served to inform policy suggestions and to frame such opinions in an EU context.

The RaiSE partner meeting in Westport in January 2019 presented an opportunity to further inform the EU context of Social Enterprise policy. A representative of the Department of Community and Rural development who was pioneering the development of policy attended and heard presentations from RaiSE partners on the status of Social Enterprise policy in each region which was very informative and contributed to a greater understanding of policies and implementation in other countries.

Since the publication of the policy the Government has organised the first ever National Conference for Social Enterprises held in September 2019.

It established a National Social Enterprise Policy Implementation Group which organised the conference and is more recently dedicating its effort towards devising measures to alleviate the very negative impact of Covid 19 on Social Enterprises in Ireland.

Holding the National Conference in September 2019 together with the seminar organised by WestBIC for Mayo Ideas Week facilitated the dissemination of the National Social Enterprise Policy as foreseen in Action 2.

WestBIC is having ongoing discussions on Action 1 re the inclusion of Social Enterprise in the next Operational Programme. The consultation phase for this is to commence in Summer 2020 and the NWRA Managing Authority will be engaged with WestBIC and our colleagues on the RaiSE project at the appropriate time.

**IFKA**

IFKA planned the following actions and activities in the RaiSE action plan for Hungary. In the table we indicate the progress made in the implementation too. (See last column.)

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
ACTION 1 - Preparing social enterprises to apply more effectively for the EDIOP-8.8.1-17 financial instrument	ACTIVITY 1 – Website development	Request for modification submitted, waiting for approval
	ACTIVITY 2 – Self assessment tool development	Request for modification submitted, waiting for approval
	ACTIVITY 3 – Website operation	Request for modification submitted, waiting for approval
	ACTIVITY 4 – Loan promotion roadshows	Request for modification submitted, waiting for approval
	ACTIVITY 5 – Financial consultancy	Request for modification submitted, waiting for approval

	ACTIVITY 6 – Workshops for SEs	Request for modification submitted, waiting for approval
	ACTIVITY 7 – Monitoring of the demand side improvements	Request for modification submitted, waiting for approval
ACTION 2 - Preparing banks and financial intermediaries to deliver the EDIOP-8.8.1-17 financial instrument more effectively	ACTIVITY 1 – Online information material on social enterprises and their characteristics for financial intermediaries and their consultants	Request for modification submitted, waiting for approval
	ACTIVITY 2 - Trainings for banks, financial intermediaries and their consultants	Request for modification submitted, waiting for approval
	ACTIVITY 3 – Monitoring of the supply side improvements	Request for modification submitted, waiting for approval

- **Reasoning of progress**

As we have reported in our former report on pilot action implementation, IFKA, OFA National Employment Public Benefit Non-profit Ltd. and the Ministry of Finance started the preparation of the action plan implementation, that has been integrated into the budget increase process of the EDIOP-5.1.2-15-2016-00001 “MarketMate” priority project, in order to secure the financial resources needed for the implementation of the action plan.

Although the budget reframing negotiations went on well, and all partners accepted the integration of the costs of the above activities in their budget, the management authority has not made the decision on the necessary modification of the subsidy contract yet.

- **Alternate actions**

One of the reasons of the prolonged decision making process of the Managing Authority regarding the modification of the subsidy contract of the EDIOP-5.1.2-15-2016-00001 “MarketMate” priority project was that the Ministry of Finance, as the Managing Authority of the priority project, have been focusing on the reframing and modification of the EDIOP-8.8.1-17 subsidized loan program. Given that the parallel non-refundable subsidy program for social enterprises (EDIOP-5.1.7-17) have been attracting SEs more than the refundable financial instrument, therefore the absorption goal of the EDIOP-8.8.1-17 program could not have been achieved. Thus the Ministry initiated the extension of the original target group (SEs of specific legal forms) by involving SMEs with social activities and proven social impact to the scope of the program, regardless of their legal form.

This modification opened new, alternate opportunities to improve the policy instrument and to make policy change. IFKA and OFA had been invited to participate in the modification of financial instrument. As the result of the joint planning process the following working materials have been elaborated by the partners:

- Modified description of the financial product (EDIOP-8.8.1-17-2017 supported loan) specifying the new target group (for-profit SMEs undertaking obligation for

operation according to social enterprise criteria and for implementing social objectives)

- Evaluation and criteria system for certifying SMEs compliance with social enterprise operation principles
- Draft certificate on SMEs compliance with social enterprise operation principles.

In case of accepting the above developments, these actions for the improvement of the EDIOP-8.8.1-17 financial instrument may be the alternative frameworks of the interventions originally planned in the Action Plan, as one of its objectives was to open the financial instrument for SMEs with significant social impact, and to increase its absorption in this target group.

## ACCIÓ

**Action 1** consists on a new service for Catalan social enterprises to offer them personalised counselling services and an analysis of their capabilities to access international tenders & multilateral funds (including the European Union funding), inspired by the learnings of the workshop “public procurement and social enterprises” celebrated in the interregional meeting in Bologna.

**Indicator:** number of “CPI Capacitació” projects for social enterprises.

Five projects “officially” so far. Right now, in the light of the coronavirus events, we are re-drafting this service, to deliver a “pack of services” to social enterprises: individual counselling + collective webinars/trainings + joint trip to Brussels.

**Action 2** will be a new service (training sessions and information materials) for Catalan social enterprises interested in receiving financial support, inspired by the Irish good practice for RaiSE “Clann Credo”.

Following Clann Credo’s inspirations explained in part 1, more seminars and workshops will be organised all over Catalonia regarding financial solutions for social enterprises. Besides, ICF (Catalonia’s public financial institution) will produce a special leaflet informing about the loans for social enterprises. The rationale behind these workshops will be the following: workshops opened to the general public (all the social enterprises and entrepreneurs interested can attend) and they will be organised all over Catalonia, profiting the “Ateneus Cooperatius” network, in order to bring the financial solutions to the territory.

**Indicator:** number of sessions about financial solutions for social enterprises organised in the “Ateneus Cooperatius” network.

Loans for social enterprises in the Catalonia’s public financial institution: still closed for 2020, will be re-opened soon. Waiting for information about the leaflet & number of informative sessions organized.

**Action 3** consists on the improvement of an existing service, that will boost the internationalisation of Catalan social enterprises with a global focus, inspired by the Scottish support system for social enterprises. It includes four specific activities:

1. **Individual International Promotion projects:** 20 individual free consultancy services per year for social economy enterprises based in Catalonia, through the 40 ACCIÓ's Trade & Investment worldwide offices.

**Indicator:** number of Individual International Promotion projects. Target: 20.

We reached the target.

2. **Collective sessions to present results:** once the annual call is finished

**Indicator:** number of attendees to the collective sessions to present results.

The 2019 edition finished on March 2019 – no collective session could be organized.

3. **Awareness and training sessions:** ACCIÓ will participate in informative sessions about the internationalisation of the social economy enterprises.

**Indicator:** number of informative sessions organised & number of attendees.

European Social Economy Regions 2019 “EU funding for social enterprises”: 90 attendees.

Federació Cooperatives Treball (January 2020): 7 attendees.

Webinar Business Support Tools for social enterprises (March 2020).

4. **Prospective International missions for the third social sector:** ACCIÓ will organise every year a mission for well-established third social sector entities and social economy enterprises, with the potential to internationalise their services or social inclusion models.

**Indicator:** number of third social sector entities and social economy enterprises participating in the prospective mission.

21 social enterprises participated in the mission for social enterprises in Brussels (November 2019) to discover EU funding opportunities for social enterprises. The most successful mission organized so far.

**Action 4** establishes a working group on social enterprises competitiveness in order to have an improved governance between the regional authorities and key stakeholders that deal with social economy, inspired by the Swedish good practice “Partnership for Social Innovation”.

In the second semester of 2019 we had individual meetings with each stakeholder to explain them the Catalan Action Plan for RaiSE & our intention of creating a working group on social enterprises competitiveness. We don't know how this will evolve due to the coronavirus.

## NEXT STEPS

In the short and mid term, the following activities have to be undertaken:

WHAT	WHO	WHEN
<b>COMMUNICATION &amp; DISSEMINATION</b>		
Send news for the website	ALL PARTNERS	News always welcome
<b>FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT &amp; REPORTING</b>		
Submission of the policy change fulfilled template to the LP.	ALL PARTNERS	01/09/2020
Submission of the sixth report, including delayed expenses from Phase I, to the LP (already validated by the FLC).	ALL PARTNERS	01/09/2020
Submission of the Joint Progress Report to the Joint Secretariat.	ACCIÓ	01/10/2020



## **PARTICIPANTS LIST (Project partners)**

### **LP – Catalan Agency for Business Competitiveness (ACCIÓ) – Government of Catalonia**

1. Paula Santarén Rodríguez
2. Juan Luis Aparicio Romero

### **P2 – IFKA Public Benefit Non-Profit Ltd for the Development of the Industry**

1. Áron Jakab
2. Boglárka Barkó
3. Noémi Koppendorfer

### **P3 – Innovation & Management Centre Limited (WestBIC)**

1. Seamus McCormack
2. Joan Fahey

### **P4 – Scottish Enterprise**

1. Darah Zahran

### **P5 – ART-ER**

1. Roberta dall'Olio
2. Claudia Ferrigno

### **P6 – Region Örebro County**

1. Anders Bro
2. Anneli Baier

### **P7 – Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI)**

1. Stefan Philipp